

## Message Text

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ACTION AGRE-00

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FM AMEMBASSY VIENNA

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UNCLAS VIENNA 5013

PASS AGRIC, FAS FOR FITZSIMMONDS AND SINDELAR

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ETRD, EAGR, AU

SUBJECT: AUSTRIAN AUTHORITIES BEGIN ENFORCING BAN AGAINST  
ARTIFICIALLY FLAVORED FRUIT PRODUCTS

1. A LEADING AUSTRIAN IMPORTER OF AMERICAN CANNED FRUITS INFORMED AGATT RECENTLY THAT DEL MONTE FRUIT COCKTAIL, A STAPLE COMMODITY IN LOCAL FOOD STORES FOR MANY YEARS, HAS RUN AFOUL OF AUSTRIAN FOOD REGULATIONS BECAUSE IT CONTAINS ARTIFICIALLY FLAVORED CHERRIES. FLAVORING OF FRUITS IS BANNED ACCORDING TO THE AUSTRIAN FOOD CODEX.

2. ALTHOUGH SUCH CHERRIES HAVE BEEN PRESENT IN CALIFORNIA FRUIT COCKTAIL ALL ALONG, PROBLEM HAS SURFACED ONLY RECENTLY IN CONNECTION WITH MORE RIGOROUS LOCAL FOOD LABELING REGULATIONS. THESE REGULATIONS STIPULATE THAT THE USE OF ANY ADDITIVES, INCLUDING COLORING AND FLAVORING AGENTS MUST BE INDICATED ON THE LABEL. WHEN THE IMPORTER COMPLIED WITH THIS REQUIREMENT, THIS ALERTED AUSTRIAN HEALTH AUTHORITIES THAT ARTIFICIAL FLAVORING AGENTS WERE PRESENT IN THE PRODUCT AND SET IN MOTION THE MACHINERY THAT WILL BRING THE COMPANY BEFORE A COURT OF LAW.

3. ON MAY 11, WE DISCUSSED THIS CASE WITH THE HEAD OF AUSTRIAN  
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FEDERAL INSTITUTE FOR FOOD INSPECTION TO FIND WAY OF REMOVING THIS NEW OBSTACLE TO AUSTRIAN IMPORTS OF U.S.FRUIT COCKTAILS WHICH IN 1976 WERE ESTIMATED AT 700,000 DOLLARS AND GROWING. ON JUNE 13, THE INSTITUTE WROTE US A LETTER WHICH WE FEEL LEAVES LITTLE HOPE THAT THE PRODUCT WILL BE ELIGIBLE FOR SALE IN ITS PRESENT FORM. AN INFORMAL TRANSLATION OF THE PERTINENT PORTION OF THAT LETTER

FOLLOWS:

4. "AS HAS ALREADY BEEN POINTED OUT IN THE MEETING OF MAY 11, THE AUSTRIAN CODEX PROVISIONS EXPRESLY PROHIBIT THE USE OF FLAVORING AGENTS, ARTIFICIAL AS WELL AS NATURAL, IN THE PREPARATION OF FRUIT MIXES. IN THE SUBJECT CASE, THE CHERRIES - WHICH REPRESENT BUT A SMALL PROPORTION OF THE MIX - TUREDECLARED AS BEING ARTIFICIALLY FLAVORED. SINCE CHERRIES, EXPECIALLY BECAUSE OF THEIR RED COLOR, ARE USED PRIMARILY FOR ORNAMENTAL PURPOSES WHICH RENDERS THE TASTE COMPONENT LESS SIGNIFICANT, IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT THE MANUFACTURER BE PROMPTED TO REFRAIN FROM THE USE OF FLAVORING AGENTS."

5. COMMENT: DURING DISCUSSION WITH THE INSTITUTE ON MAY 11 THEY POINTED OUT THAT U.S. EXPORTERS OF ARTIFICIALLY FLAVORED FRUIT PRODUCTS MIGHT SOON BE FACING A MAJOR PROBLEM ELSEWHERE AS WELL AS "A BAN AGAINST SUCH PRODUCTS WILL EVENTUALLY BE APPLIED BY MOST IMPORTING COUNTRIES."

6. BELIEVE THE NEW AUSTRIAN DEVELOPMENT SHOULD BE BROUGHT TO THE ATTENTION OF THE U.S. CANNING INDUSTRY. WE WONDER WHETHER THE FIVE OR SIX CHERRIES IN A CAN, IF UNFLAVORED, WOULD MAKE ANY NOTICEABLE DIFFERENCE IN THE TASTE OR CONSUMER ACCEPTANCE OF THIS PRODUCT.

7. PLEASE INFORM US OF ANY REACTION TO THIS PROBLEM BY  
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THE U.S. CWBWJRI.## MEEHAN

NOTE BY OC/T: ##AS RECEIVED.

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## Message Attributes

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